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AUTHOR Deller, Don K.
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ABSTRACT

Educators in Indiana's Duneland School District found the transition from elementary schools to a newly organized middle school unacceptably difficult for both the students and their parents. After assessing student and parent preconceptions of the middle school as revealed in their responses to questionnaires, the middle school principal developed and proposed a model for more successfully introducing parents to middle school procedures and policies. The model included objectives centering on the establishment of effective and positive communications between sixth grade parents and their children's home room teachers. The first orientation process covered nine months, from March to November, and included explaining the program to elementary educators and middle school home room teachers, registration and orientation of the sixth grade students and their parents, and followup evaluations by teachers and administrators of the process and its success at meeting its objectives. Final evaluation of the first orientation process revealed significant improvements in all aspects of the parent school relationship. Extensive appendixes present forms and questionnaires used in the model orientation process. (Author/PGD)

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A MODEL FOR IMPROVING PARENT ORIENTATION
TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

by

Don K. Deller

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the National Ed.D. Program
for Educational Leaders, Nova University

Introductory Practicum Report
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ABSTRACT

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Descriptors: *Parent Teacher Conferences/*Parent Student Conferences/
*Parent Teacher Co-operation/*Parent School Relationship/*Student
Teacher relationship/*Student School Relationship/*Parent Attitudes/
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mediate Grades/*Middle Schools/*Orientation/*Family School Relation-
ship.

This document describes a practicum designed to improve orientation for parents of students entering middle school. The aims of the practicum were to develop a procedure for all parents to meet personally with homeroom teachers; to develop a procedure suitable to teachers for conducting parent conferences during the school day without closing school; to assure that parents of students entering middle school have a positive feeling about the parent conferences, orientation procedures, and the students' transition and adjustment to middle school; to reduce fears, anxieties, and/or erroneous perceptions of the middle school among students and parents; and to assure that students make a successful transition and adjustment to middle school.

The orientation process covered a nine-month period of time, spanning the months of March through November. Emphasis was placed on the homeroom teacher-parent conference as a means of orienting parents to middle school procedures and policies, as well as

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establishing effective home-school communications. Parents and teachers responded favorably to the orientation design and outcomes when surveyed at the end of the practicum. The model was recommended to be institutionalized for the district. It was suggested that considerations for similar processes in both the seventh and eighth grades be made to achieve related objectives for students and parents in those grades. (Appendixes include samples of questionnaires, forms and letters to parents; guidelines for conducting homeroom teacher-parent conferences; visitor evaluation form; parent-homeroom teacher evaluation form; homeroom teacher critiques of parent conferences; student behavior and grade reports; and homeroom program outline.)

PREFACE

The town of Chesterton, Indiana, is located in Porter County and is one of several small suburban towns and cities that border the southern shore of Lake Michigan. It is situated outside the boundaries of the Indiana Dunes State Park and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Park.

The Duneland School District is comprised of a ninety-five square mile area in Porter County which includes three townships and a small portion of a fourth. There are five thousand students served by the district through one high school, two middle schools, and five elementary schools.

This practicum was conducted at Westchester Middle School, which is one of the two middle schools in the Duneland School District. It was converted from the junior high school organizational structure to the middle school concept in 1971. At that time the Duneland District shifted from the 6-3-3 to the 5-3-4 plan. There are seven hundred students in grades 6, 7, and 8, housed at Westchester Middle School. A staff of fifty teachers, administrators, aides, and secretaries implement the total program.

A significant feature of Westchester's curricular design is a comprehensive co-curricular daily student activities program. The homeroom teacher, utilizing skills of management, counseling, advising, and relating to students (within a specially structured scheme) enables the homeroom to function as the foundation of the school's total program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this practicum was to develop a model for improving parent orientation to the middle school program.

The middle school movement has brought about many significant changes in the process of servicing the needs of middle level students. Such changes have been the result of perceptive middle level educators recognizing that there are three distinct levels in education (elementary, middle, secondary) rather than the traditionally accepted and treated two (elementary, secondary). While this has represented a crucial step for educators to establish a renewed sense of purpose and direction for middle level education, it has increased the need for middle school teachers and administrators to communicate more effectively with parents.

It appears evident from reports of schools converting from junior high to middle school that parents must understand the objectives and operations of the middle school program. It is equally important for the school to understand the parents' concern for the education of their children. Thus, planning and effective communication are musts for prospective middle school parents if proper attitudes toward the middle school are to be developed. Parental ignorance of educational programming and practice causes mistrust, and often leads parents to make unwise decisions about their child's

educational welfare. Parental bigotry and shortsightedness have also adversely affected many educational innovations. Through interview, the parents' level of understanding of middle school operations and objectives can be ascertained.¹

This practicum was concerned about students in transition from the elementary school to the middle school. It focused on the process of orienting parents to the middle school program through planning and communication as a means of better facilitating students' movement and adjustment to the middle school, as well as improving their educational experiences.

¹M. Ann Grooms, Perspectives on the Middle School (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1967), p. 38.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Description of the School

Westchester was built in 1966 under junior high school educational specifications. Although the structure is traditionally styled, it was constructed with a forward thinking perspective. There are some quasi-open aspects which provide for flexibility. This proved to be advantageous for the practitioner who is the principal of the building which currently functions as a middle school.

The middle school concept was developed by a K-12 middle school committee under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent and the practitioner. The entire program was designed within the theoretical framework of the middle school concept. The faculty includes a balance of elementary and secondary trained teachers. The curriculum is student-centered and activity-oriented. It is implemented as an experience curriculum and includes a variety of "hands on" experiences for the transescent.

A comprehensive daily co-curricular student activities program functioning through thirty homerooms (ten per grade level) serves as the foundation of the entire program. Each homeroom teacher is responsible for approximately twenty-three students. As homeroom teachers, they have a multi-faceted relationship with their individual students. The relationship is basically non-academic, although

they actively monitor the progress of their students' work in all classes.

The primary skills that homeroom teachers must exercise include management, counseling, advising, and relating. The guidance-administrative team concentrates on the continuing development of activities, procedures, methods, and strategies for enhancing the homeroom teachers' abilities to perform the needed skills.

The basic components of the Daily Co-curricular Student Activities Program include for all students (1) group competition, (2) individual competition, (3) special interest presentations, (4) vocational presentations, (5) guidance presentations, (6) leisure reading, (7) recreational films, and (8) service to the school. Wherever the homeroom is scheduled to participate each day, the homeroom teacher accompanies the homeroom group. Thus, the homeroom teacher has an excellent opportunity to exercise the skills of counseling, advising, and relating, and to develop a broad understanding of each student as an individual.

Contributing Factors to the Problem

In the Duneland elementary schools, an effective conferencing program has been established over an eight-year period. Approximately 95 per cent of the parents in five elementary schools have met with teachers twice a year to discuss the progress of their children. Such personal contact has afforded parents greater insight into the school's program, kept the line of communication between the teacher and the parent open, enabled teachers to more adequately report student progress, interpret assessment data, and generally prompt a

positive, confident attitude toward the instructional staff and the Duneland Schools. Further, the students' satisfactory adjustment and progress in the elementary schools have been evident as a result.

Although the design of Westchester's program enabled the staff to assist students in many exciting and unique ways (after entering the school), from its inception some transitional needs still existed. As students moved from the elementary to the middle school, many anxieties and apprehensions were evident among students and parents. Consequently, parents and students were developing a "perceived view" of the middle school as they were usually relying on conversation with non-school individuals who only had opinions, or were conveying "second-hand" information. Thus, the "perceived view" became the "real view" of Westchester. This presented a serious problem for students and parents in preparation for middle school entry (especially April through August) and in the early stages after entry.

The parents' role in the transition has been extremely crucial because it has affected the students' attitude positively or negatively toward middle school entry. If parents and/or students had a negative perception (whether real or not) of various aspects of the middle school program and procedures, it usually perpetuated after the student entered. This caused adjustment for the students to be slow, reluctant, and even suspicious. This was evident, for example, when a new student inadvertently neglected to follow certain outlined procedures, and, due to unnecessary fears, anxieties, shyness, or other assorted reasons, did not make staff aware of the dilemma,

parents became upset and contacted the school "demanding" an explanation. Under such tensions the school had little opportunity to improve the overall attitude of the parents. Further, a full understanding of the school's programs and procedures was difficult to convey even though the explanation relative to the specific problem was clear, complete, and understood.

Before enrolling at Westchester many students expressed fears of entering the restrooms because older students would harass them. Some were frightened of the "initiation" that would occur. Others were concerned that no one would help them find their way around the new building or help them with their combination lock. Parents and students were worried about the "big drug and smoking problems" and wondered what was being done to "eliminate the problem and protect the kids." They were curious about the courses to be offered, homework to be assigned, groupings to be made (especially in the areas of math and communications), the procedure for "picking students up where they are" in the continuous pupil progress system, the efforts that would be made to improve reading (and all basic skills), the considerations given for special needs and individual differences (learning, social, physical, emotional), discipline procedures, grading differences from elementary, reporting and conferencing procedures, the daily co-curricular student activities program, transportation, lunch, extra-curricular opportunities and requirements, as well as many other matters.

Historically, parental involvement has been limited at the junior high/middle school level throughout the nation. In school

districts where even the best examples of parent involvement have been evident at the elementary level, the middle and secondary schools have found little enduring parental enthusiasm for continuing involvement and participation.

As President of the Indiana Middle School Association and member of the National Middle School Association Board, the practitioner devoted considerable time and discussion with middle school administrators throughout the nation. It became apparent that comprehensive, effective conferencing models were scarce. The problems of transition from elementary to middle school seemed paramount for students and parents in most school districts. Duneland was no exception.

When the Duneland Schools adopted the concept of continuous pupil progress some ten years ago, the commitment was predicated on five basic notions. First, that each child is an individual and should progress at his own rate in accordance with his abilities. Second, that the entire K-12 curriculum should be developed sequentially through curricular committees comprising membership from all three major levels (elementary, middle, secondary) of the program. Third, that articulation among and between levels and staff is essential and crucial for appropriate student progress. Fourth, that instruction should include and utilize appropriate diagnostic-prescriptive and evaluative techniques. Fifth, that a non-graded form of student evaluation should be utilized in the elementary grades in conjunction with a comprehensive parental conferencing procedure.

In view of the fact that no suitable conferencing program was

devised for the Duneland Middle Schools, and a traditional grading system was used (instead of the non-graded used at the elementary level), the need for establishing a more effective method of communicating with parents at the middle school level became urgent. This situation actually originated at the time of the conversion of the junior high (7-8-9) concept to the middle school (6-7-8) eight years ago. At that time a rather thorough investigation and study was made to determine how the continuous pupil progress concept could be effectively implemented in the middle school while incorporating the parental conferencing procedure. Although it was reaffirmed that the continuous pupil progress concept would continue to serve as the basis for instruction in the middle school, no conferencing plan was outlined. Thus, it remained an important factor to be resolved in view of the effectiveness at the elementary level.

While the conferences at the elementary level have focused on the academic progress of students, they have provided an opportunity for parents to discuss the overall operational procedures of the school. This in large measure has accounted for the success of the elementary conferencing program. Such communication has generally reduced the parents' concerns about the school's program, afforded parents the opportunity for input, and generated a positive attitude toward school. Having had six years of this kind of relationship with the schools and their children entering another educational level, attending new physical facilities, following many different operational policies and procedures, having new teachers, and working under different administrators, parents wanted and needed a thorough orientation to the middle school.

As the continuous progress instructional approach has been extended into the middle school and these many changes have occurred, the absence of an all-inclusive, comprehensive parent conferencing plan created a communications and understanding gap between parents of students entering middle grades and the middle school staff. Many of the questions parents had dealt simply with the physical change from one building to another and the orientation to the new school. Other questions centered around school policies, operational procedures, student management, peer and social relationship of middle school students, and activities included and available to students.

Still other questions were raised about the instructional program--placement procedures, materials to be used, grading and reporting system used, etc. Should the gap have been allowed to continue, an intensified situation might have occurred which might have impeded the effective implementation of the program. Further, parental understanding of their children's growth, development, and academic progress through middle school could have been reduced, and their personal involvement in the middle school all but eliminated.

The practitioner concluded that if Duneland was to perpetuate the confidence of parents throughout middle grade years, systematic conferencing was essential. Thus the challenge for the middle school administrator was to develop a conferencing model for improving parental orientation and involvement in middle grade education. In so doing students would be assisted more adequately and efficiently through the transition and adjustment to middle school.

Needs Assessment

In May, 1977, questionnaires were administered to 210 fifth grade students at the three elementary schools (Yost, Bailly, Brummitt) feeding into Westchester Middle School to determine more precisely their attitudes, perceptions, and concerns. The following data were obtained: (1) 60 per cent of the students had fears or anxieties about moving into the middle school (although 92 per cent were looking forward to the move); (2) 63 per cent felt that they would have problems with older students when they arrived at Westchester; and (3) 42 per cent felt they would have trouble with the academic work in the middle school (getting homework done and receiving satisfactory marks) (see Appendix A, page 45).

At the same time, questionnaires were distributed to parents of the same 210 fifth grade students. Response to the questionnaires was obtained from 163 parents (each response represented a student in the fifth grade group surveyed). This represented a 77.6 per cent response. The following data were obtained from the respondents: (1) 59 per cent felt that the adjustment to Westchester Middle School would be difficult for their child because "teachers show more concern for students as individuals in the elementary school"; (2) 55 per cent felt that basic skill development would not receive the attention in the middle school that it had in the elementary school; (3) 52 per cent were concerned about discipline problems at the middle school level (specific concerns noted were smoking and drugs, and behavior of older students); (4) 75 per cent expressed regret there would be no continuation of regularly scheduled parent

conferences; and (5) 63 per cent expressed concern for the change of grading and reporting practices between the two levels (see Appendix B, page 46).

The percentages yielded by the surveys represented the "perceived view" of Westchester Middle School. Actually, during the first quarter of the 1977-78 school year, 45 per cent of the sixth grade students were identified as having had assorted problems (tardiness, lost in building, difficulties with lock on lockers, understanding and following school policies and procedures, and the daily routine of the activities program, general behavior problems, etc.). Twenty-three per cent had problems with older students during the first quarter. Students experiencing problems were identified by referrals to the assistant principal for specific incidents, or through student consultation with the homeroom teacher. Fifteen per cent received at least one failing grade in classwork at the end of the first quarter.

Sixth grade homeroom teachers and all teachers of sixth grade students were interviewed by the principal to elicit their observations. The teachers unanimously agreed that (1) perceived (anticipated) problems by fifth grade students were far greater than real problems actually experienced at Westchester, (2) parental anxieties and fears about the middle school contributed significantly to the students' anticipation of problems, and (3) an improved procedure for orienting parents to the middle school could reduce parent and student anxieties and fears, retain parental confidence, and better assure smooth and successful transition and adjustment to

the middle school for the students. They emphasized the need for the opportunity to continue open and direct lines of communication in order for parents to maintain the same confidence in school programs and procedures, staff, administration, and the satisfactory welfare of their children they had experienced in the elementary schools.

Upon reviewing and considering all the data revealed in the surveys and the teacher observations, the practitioner developed and proposed a model for improving parent orientation to the middle school program.

CHAPTER III

OBJECTIVES

In January, 1978, the practitioner met with the assistant superintendent and formally proposed the "Model for Improving Parent Orientation to the Middle School Program." The proposal was accepted and the practicum began in March, 1978. The practitioner conducted a meeting with the three elementary principals from the three feeder schools (Yost, Bailly, and Brummitt) to explain the objectives and the process to be used. Additional meetings were held with the fifth grade teachers in each of the three schools to brief them on the objectives, process, and their role in the process.

The objectives were developed by the practitioner, the assistant principal, and the two counselors at Westchester Middle School. They were based upon the input from teachers, students, elementary administrators, the assistant superintendent, counselors, and the building administrators. The focus was on the parents' role and influence on incoming fifth grade students during the period from spring through the first quarter of the sixth grade year. The objectives were concerned with the improvement of parent orientation to the middle school program and the students' smooth, satisfactory, and successful transition to Westchester Middle School.

Terminal Objectives

Terminal objectives for resolving the problem for parents of students entering middle school and the students themselves were established as follows:

1. To develop a conferencing procedure which will enable a minimum of 70 per cent of the sixth grade parents to personally and individually discuss matters of orientation with the homeroom teacher.
2. To develop and implement a procedure suitable to the staff for all sixth grade homeroom teachers to be available to conduct a parent conference with parents during the school day or in the evening. Further, to assure that 100 per cent of the sixth grade homeroom teachers respond favorably to the procedures for conducting parent orientation conferences.
3. To assure that 75 per cent of the sixth grade parents indicate on the questionnaires issued to parents at the conclusion of the conference, that the conference and orientation procedures are useful and effective, that they understand the school's program, that the transition from elementary to middle school is being satisfactorily handled, and that they are confident teachers are interested in their children as individuals and concerned about their adjustment and academic growth in middle school. Further, that 75 per cent of the randomly selected parents with whom the principal confers, will yield the same affirmation.
4. To reduce or eliminate by 50 per cent the fears, anxieties,

and/or erroneous perceptions of the middle school among sixth grade students and their parents by the end of the first quarter.

5. To assure that sixth grade students make a successful transition and adjustment to middle school by having no more than 10 per cent of the students referred to the assistant principal for behavior reasons, and no more than 5 per cent receive failing grades in classes during the first quarter.

Process Objectives

Process objectives were developed to enable students and parents to become more informed about the program at Westchester Middle School in advance of moving into the school itself. Further, they were designed to assure that effective communications between parents and the school were established early in the first quarter of the school year. The process used was as follows:

1. To provide comprehensive information to fifth grade students about Westchester Middle School during the months of April and May, prior to entering the sixth grade in August.
2. To provide parents of fifth grade students with an overview of Westchester's program, an opportunity to visit the school, and time for discussing the program and procedures.
3. To provide a day of registration for only sixth grade students to assure students and parents receive personal attention to their needs and concerns.
4. To provide a pleasant and successful experience for sixth grade students during their initial days of entry to Westchester Middle School.

5. To establish a procedure for all parents of sixth grade students to meet with their child's homeroom teacher for a fifteen or twenty minute conference without causing disruption to the entire school schedule and program.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPING A PRACTICUM DESIGN

Research Used in Developing the Design

Based on the ERIC search and review of related literature, and consultation with middle school administrators in Indiana, the mid-west, and other parts of the country, the practitioner concluded that few middle schools had comprehensive orientation programs for parents of incoming sixth grade students. Where extensive efforts were made to orient parents to the middle school program, better and smoother transition was evident by the students. Some of the ideas received from the search and consultation were incorporated as the design of the practicum was developed.

The need for developing and establishing effective, positive home-school relationships is stressed throughout the literature. Several examples are cited, a variety of approaches explained, and numerous suggestions offered relative to academic or behavior conferencing. However, the review of the literature revealed few studies at the middle school level with a definite need for additional studies existing.

Hartel¹ found in her study of parent attitudes on the parent-

¹Suzanne Mr. Hartel, "A Study of Present Attitudes on the Parent-Teacher Conference" (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 147 288, 1977).

teacher conference that parents (1) expect to confer with the teacher throughout the year, (2) view the conference as important, (3) approach the conference with their own expectations, (4) are both comfortable and uncomfortable in the conference situation, (5) know what constitutes a meaningful conference, and (6) have constructive suggestions for making the conference more meaningful.

Re¹ said, "It is vital to consider the feelings, receptivity, and ideas of parents when you try to communicate." Oberlin and Oberlin² state, "Our son needs what any student needs in a middle school . . . an interesting, challenging program at his level, one which will make him feel comfortable and successful, and one in which he feels that people care about him and his concerns."

In Alexander's³ discussion of the emerging middle, he said, "the middle schoolers and their parents particularly need orientation to the middle school." Further, the middle school can simplify the orientation by providing the opportunity for children and parents to visit the school prior to transfer, with frequent parent visitations hoped for after their children are enrolled in middle school. Parents and children do want to know why they are leaving elementary school, why there is a different instructional organization, why the

¹Elaine F. Re, "Dimensions Beyond Words: Successful Parent Conferences," English Journal 64 (November, 1975): 63-65.

²Lynn Oberlin and Mary Jean Oberlin, "What Our Son Needs Is a Middle School," Clearinghouse 49 (March, 1976): 323-324.

³William M. Alexander, The Emergent Middle School (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), pp. 157-158.

name has been changed (if it has), why certain activities associated with the high school have been eliminated, and how to "get ready" for the middle school.

Schein and Schein¹ said, "though you may need to discuss the program, it is wise to keep in mind that parents are much more concerned about their individual children than the general program. You may wish to discuss what the child has done, what he is doing, what his interests are and what he needs. Parents may provide invaluable information that you can use to help their child learn."

The middle school must recognize the existence of parental needs and attitudes, according to Grooms,² because improved parent-student communication contributes to student success throughout middle school years. An effective program for students entering middle school for the first time must create the impression that the individual student counts. He will not just be a name in the book, but an individual known personally by the professional staff.

Moss³ says, "The hours for parent conferencing should span the school day, and include evening hours for parental convenience." Grooms⁴ says, "Children should not be dismissed from school to make time for parent conferences." Most communities have working parents

¹ Bernard Schein and Martha Schein, Open Classrooms in the Middle School (West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), p. 75

² Grooms, p. 35.

³ Theodore C. Moss, Middle School (Boston, Mass.: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1969), pp. 192-193.

⁴ Grooms, p. 174.

and when children are sent home, it seriously disrupts the family. In fact, all conferences should not even be held on the same day. If children are not sent home, teachers can take turns conducting parent conferences.

Alternatives Considered

In Duneland, at the middle school level, students receive instruction departmentally, which involves seven or more teachers. This differs from their elementary experience of working with only three teachers. Thus, when elementary conferences are held for parents it is possible for parents to easily meet with the teachers when special conference days are scheduled. On such days school is not in session during the two days in the fall and two days in the spring set aside for conferences.

As consideration was given to continue this procedure in the same format at the middle school it became mechanically too time-consuming for each teacher to meet with every parent. For example, in the areas of Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Art, Music, Physical Education, Health, and Recreation those teachers instruct every student (700) during the course of the year through quarter or semester courses. Thus, it appeared that this alternative was unrealistic.

When looking at another alternative that was similar in design it also had several limitations. Such an alternative retained the scheduled days for conferences to occur but did not schedule every parent into a time slot. Rather, conferences were held if parents wished to call to arrange a conference with any or all of the teachers on the specified conference days; or, they could simply report

to school and await an available time to see the teachers they wished to see.

Although continuing administrative investigation over the past six years revealed that few middle schools have developed an effective conferencing model, this type of arrangement seemed to be the most common. However, such a procedure appeared to de-emphasize, rather than emphasize, the real importance of the parent conference. Although it provided a time frame for conferences to be held, it left the matter to parent choice as to whether they needed to attend. If the information to be communicated from school to parent is significant, then it seemed essential for the school to establish a procedure whereby the information could be effectively and comprehensively communicated.

Recognizing that these two plans did not seem appropriate for our middle school, this practicum proposed to approach the matter through homeroom teachers. At Westchester Middle School each student is assigned to a homeroom and spends fifty minutes daily in the homeroom. At the beginning of each day a fifteen-minute homeroom is held. The same homeroom groups reassemble daily at noon for a thirty-five minute co-curricular comprehensive student activities program. The primary purpose of such an expanded non-academic offering is to enable the teachers to have an opportunity to relate with students in numerous informal ways. Through such teacher-student involvement an effort is made to develop and retain an enthusiastic, positive attitude toward school, peers, and staff. In so doing, the teacher assumes a greater role as counselor-teacher and utilizes skills of

counseling, advising, and relating to students. It was determined, therefore, that such a structure for developing personal relationships with students could also serve as the most appropriate avenue for the school's direct communication with the parents. It was felt that if an effective procedure could be developed for homeroom teachers to have a communicational relationship with each of the parents of students entering the middle school, a parental orientation to the multi-faceted middle school program could retain the established positive parental attitude and participation throughout the transitional process.

Upon consideration of the review of literature, available alternatives, and the existing circumstances in the Duneland Schools, the following operational plan and time sequence was established for developing a model for improving parent orientation to the middle school (the practicum) and followed:

OPERATIONAL PLAN AND
TIME SEQUENCE FOR PRACTICUM
(March 1978 - November 1978)

- March Principal of Westchester Middle School met with Principals and 5th Grade Staff from Bailey, Brummitt, and Yost Elementary Schools. (General Explanation of Process)
- May (2nd Week) Principal, Counselors, 6th Grade Level Co-ordinator, and Team Leaders from Westchester met Staff and Administration of the three feeder schools. (Review of Students, Materials, Placement Recommendations, and Special Needs)
- May (3rd Week) General Orientation and School Visitation for parents of entering sixth grade students from all three feeder schools.
- August (2nd Week) General Registration for sixth grade students.
- August (3rd Week) Principal met with ten (10) sixth grade homeroom teachers. (Review of role, responsibilities, and procedures for parent conferences)
- September (2nd Week) Principal mailed letter to parents of entering sixth grade students. (Set time and date for parent conferences)
- October (1st Week) Sixth Grade Homeroom Teachers contacted parents by phone. (Confirmations of time and date of parent conferences)
- October (1st Week) Principal met all ten (10) Sixth Grade Homeroom Teachers. (Review guidelines for conducting parent conferences)
- October (1st-2nd Weeks) Parent Conferences for parents of entering sixth grade students were conducted by homeroom teachers. (Personal orientation to Westchester Middle School Program and Procedures)

OPERATIONAL PLAN--continued

- November (1st Week) Parent Conference Evaluation Forms were returned.
- November (1st Week) Sixth Grade homeroom teachers submitted written report of the Conferences. (Summary, Evaluation, and Recommendations)
- November (2nd Week) Principal and ten (10) sixth grade homeroom teachers conducted critiques of parent conferences and overall orientation procedures.
- November (end of 1st Quarter) Principal arranged and conducted parent conferences with twenty (20) parents of sixth grade students. (Evaluation of conferences and orientation procedures)
- November (4th Week) Conference Committee (Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Counselors, Two Sixth Grade Teachers) met. (Review, evaluate, and make recommendations)

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTING THE PRACTICUM DESIGN

Procedure and Steps Involved

Several steps were included over a nine-month period of time to implement the model for improving parental orientation to the Westchester Middle School program. First, the principal and counselors met with members of the staff and administration at each of the three feeder elementary schools (Yost, Bailly, and Brummitt) in early March. The purpose of those meetings was to outline and thoroughly discuss the steps involved, and the sequence of events to be used throughout the students' transitional process. The explanation served to emphasize the role of fifth grade teachers and principals.

In April the elementary schools conducted their last parent conferences. At that time, the fifth grade teachers issued a letter which had been drafted by the principal of Westchester Middle School (see Appendix C, page 47) with an attached form (see Appendix D, page 48) for parents to indicate their preference to time for a parent-teacher conference at Westchester Middle School in early October. The fifth grade teachers discussed the form with parents, and received the completed forms either during the conference or in the days that immediately followed. The letter was the initial effort by Westchester Middle School to make parents aware of the orientation

process. It was an appropriate time to have it personally issued by the fifth grade teachers so they could answer preliminary questions, ease some anxieties, convey support for Westchester's program, and assist them to understand what the orientation procedures would include and the time frame for them to occur.

Following the April parent conferences, fifth grade teachers conducted periodic discussions with fifth grade students about their movement to Middle School. Any questions by teachers that arose as a result of the discussions with students were answered by middle school counselors over the telephone. The elementary teachers also disseminated information to students and parents relative to the General Orientation and School Visitation Meeting (see Appendix E, page 49), which was held in the evening at Westchester Middle School on May 16.

During the second and third weeks of May, a middle school team consisting of the principal, counselors, sixth grade level co-ordinator, and the team leaders for the areas of math, science, social studies, and communication, met with the staff members and administrators in each of the three feeder elementary schools. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss (1) the materials being used instructionally at the elementary level, (2) the current placement and recommended grouping for each student in all of the four basic areas, (3) special needs of the students, and (4) other data useful for enabling a smooth transition for students from their respective elementary buildings to Westchester Middle School.

On May 16, the General Orientation Meeting and School Visitation

for parents was held in the evening at Westchester Middle School. Parents of entering sixth grade students from all three feeder elementary schools were invited and encouraged to attend. Students were also invited to accompany their parents to the orientation. However, it was presented to parents. A hand count was taken the following day in fifth grade classes to determine how many students and parents actually attended. It revealed that at least one parent attended for 77 per cent of the fifth grade students. Sixty-four per cent of the students accompanied their parents. Three per cent of the students attended without their parents.

The orientation meeting began with a ten-minute slide-tape music presentation which provided an overview of Westchester's program. The counselors then took fifteen minutes to discuss (in general) the instructional program, scheduling, and placement procedures used (emphasizing the meetings held among elementary and middle school staff), and other information necessary for parents to enhance a non-threatening, enjoyable transition for students moving from elementary to middle school.

The principal took fifteen minutes to explain the role of the homeroom teacher and the importance of the relationship the students would develop with their homeroom teacher. He then outlined the sequence of orientation events that were planned to occur through November. Dates and other information relative to registration were also presented and explained. This presentation was followed by a ten-minute question and answer period, which concluded the formal program.

Parents were encouraged to tour the building facilities. Student tour guides assisted parents with their visitation and observations. The principal and counselors remained available in the presentation area to answer specific questions and personally greet parents and students.

On August 16, registration was held for sixth grade students only. Parents had been encouraged, through the spring orientation meeting and local newspapers, to accompany students to registration. Having a special day for sixth graders permitted them to re-acquaint themselves with other sixth-grade friends without interferences from seventh and eighth grade students. Parents had the opportunity to visit with other "new" parents, and leisurely accompany their children as they toured the building. Student guides assisted with building tours.

At the registration, class schedules were issued, transportation routes were identified, locks and lockers were issued, book rental was collected, and other special information was provided. Administrators and counselors were available to greet and assist parents with special concerns, requests, and needs that required personal attention.

During the in-service days for teachers, prior to the third week of August, the principal met with the ten sixth-grade homeroom teachers. The purpose of that meeting was to (1) review the role and responsibilities of the homeroom teacher (see Appendix F, page 50), (2) discuss and emphasize especially the importance of the counselor-teacher role of homeroom teachers as they utilize the

skills of counseling, advising, and relating to students, (3) discuss the importance of demonstrating the personal interest and attention to the needs of incoming sixth grade students (e.g., friendly, helpful, available, and assisting with lock combination, directions, etc.), and (4) discuss the role of the homeroom teacher, procedures, and the timetable for conducting parent conferences in October.

Homeroom teachers played a crucial role as school opened. They assured that all students were quick to feel "at home" in their new school. In so doing, it was evident among the students that they were in fact "at ease" at Westchester in a matter of only a few days. Relationship building among teachers and students was clearly occurring very rapidly. This facilitated the needs of the new students, and enabled classroom teachers to move productively and smoothly as classwork began.

In the second week of September, the principal mailed letters to all parents of entering sixth grade students (see Appendix G, page 59). Using the form completed by parents in April at their last elementary parent-teacher conference (see Appendix D, page 48), which indicated their preferred time of day for a conference, the principal established a conference time and date for them to meet with their child's homeroom teacher. The letter also outlined the purposes of the conference which were (1) to enable them to become personally acquainted with their child's homeroom teacher, (2) to receive a personal welcome to Westchester Middle School, (3) to assess and discuss their child's transition into the middle school during the first weeks, (4) to afford parents the opportunity to ask

questions or make the homeroom teacher aware of special concerns they might have, (5) for parents to receive specific information (along with explanation relative to policies and procedures used at Westchester), and (6) to establish a line of communication between parents and the school in order that their child might be more efficiently and effectively served while at Westchester Middle School. Further, the letter pointed out that it would not be a purpose of the conference to discuss their child's academic progress, but that such a conference with the appropriate teacher, or teachers, could be arranged on another day at their request.

Conferences were scheduled over a ten-day period during the first two weeks in October. The homeroom teachers each day were released to conduct conferences. Substitutes were employed to assume all class responsibilities for the homeroom teachers on the designated day of conferences. This freed the homeroom teachers to use the day as necessary, and without obligation to regular school matters in order to adequately meet the conference schedule. A total of ten substitutes were required during the two-week period at a cost of \$25.00 per day per teacher.

Prior to the conference, the homeroom teachers followed up the principal's letter with a phone call to confirm, or re-schedule, the time of the conference. This established a personal contact in advance of the conference as a means of insuring a commitment from the parents to attend. When the homeroom teachers talked with them about the conference, they invited them to come earlier than the designated time, or to arrange to visit the school one or more days

prior to the conference to observe the regular school day program in session. This would permit them to raise questions related to such a visit at the conference.

The principal met with all ten sixth grade homeroom teachers again prior to the conference days to review the conferencing procedures. The purpose of the meeting, specifically, was to discuss suggested guidelines for conducting the conference (see Appendix H, page 56), to assure continuity and consistency in all conferences. The principal also emphasized the importance of choosing the appropriate expression to avoid misinterpretation by parents (see Appendix I, page 58). A Conference Summary form (see Appendix J, page 59) was also discussed. The summary form, when completed by the homeroom teacher for each conference provided a record of teacher and parent observations, notation of matters to follow up with appropriate staff (e.g., nurse, administrators, counselors, coaches, other teachers, etc.), an opportunity to evaluate the conference and make recommendations as necessary.

Homeroom teachers met with each of the parents for a twenty-minute conference on their scheduled day. They were free to use the day as they wished. According to the varied times for conferences, they could leave the building for a few hours and continue later in the day. The range of time was about eight hours. Some began early in the morning and finished by 4:00 p.m., while others started around noon and concluded at 9:00 p.m. By having a substitute teacher assigned to cover their regular classes, they had the opportunity to exercise great flexibility. If, however, due to circumstances, some parents were unable to attend a conference on the designated date, they were responsible for attempting to reschedule at another time.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION

The practitioner met with fifth grade teachers and principals of the three feeder elementary schools at the end of May to discuss and evaluate the process prior to the close of school. He met with the counselors at Westchester regularly throughout the process from March to November to assess progress of the plan. He conversed daily with the individual sixth grade teachers when school began in late August to monitor the process. He talked regularly with students, in the halls and during the lunch period. Further, he conversed with parents in conferences and often as they entered the building to visit or attend to other errands for their children, and analyzed the questionnaires (see Appendix B, page 46).

Evaluation of Process Objectives

Analysis of Process Objective One

1. To provide comprehensive information to fifth grade students about Westchester Middle School during the months of April and May, prior to entering the sixth grade in August.

Student and parent handbooks were provided for fifth grade teachers and elementary principals. They were used to conduct discussions with students. After the Orientation and Visitation Meeting was conducted in May, counselors and the principal again visited the

fifth grade classes to discuss the middle school. When the principal met with the fifth grade teachers and elementary principals in late May to discuss and evaluate the process, they expressed confidence that students had a good understanding of the materials presented relative to advance orientation, and were ready for the next steps in the orientation process.

Analysis of Process Objective Two

2. To provide parents of fifth grade students with an overview of Westchester's program, an opportunity to visit the school, and time for discussing the program and procedures.

The principal conducted an Orientation and Visitation Meeting at Westchester Middle School in mid-May. He extended invitations to parents of fifth grade students who desired to visit Westchester, and encouraged them to do so. Visitor evaluation forms (see Appendix K, page 60), completed by those electing to visit, revealed that parents were pleased with their observations of the school and the program being implemented. When the principal conducted conferences with twenty parents in November, they all expressed satisfaction with the orientation procedures and spring meeting, the encouragement and opportunities for visitation, and the availability of all personnel at Westchester to attend to parents' and students' needs and concerns.

Analysis of Process Objective Three

3. To provide a day of registration for only sixth grade students, to assure that students and parents receive personal attention to their needs and concerns.

The principal's conferences revealed that parents considered a separate day for sixth grade registration to be crucial. They expressed much appreciation for the personal attention and hospitality provided by counselors, the administration, secretaries, and student guides. The absence of seventh and eighth grade students at sixth grade registration enabled students and parents to make very positive observations about the school and the staff.

Analysis of Process Objective Four

4. To provide a pleasant and successful experience for sixth grade students during their initial days of entry to Westchester Middle School.

The principal's observation of students entering the school each day for the first three weeks revealed that teachers greeted students warmly. They assisted with locker and lock problems, directions to rooms, and other needs of the new students. Seventh and eighth grade homeroom teachers, too, were available to assist. Further, it was evident that their appeal to seventh and eighth grade students through homerooms for their assistance with sixth grade students added positive support (rather than negative) to new students' needs. Conversations by the principal with sixth grade students revealed that students "liked Westchester" and were getting help as they needed it. After only three days, it was unusual to find a sixth grade student late to class, even though the building is large and classes span the entire building.

Analysis of Process Objective Five

5. To establish a procedure for all parents of sixth grade students to meet with their child's homeroom teacher for a 15-20 minute conference without causing disruption to the entire school schedule and program.

The principal met and discussed the process with all ten sixth grade homeroom teachers at the conclusion of the ten days of conferencing. They expressed much enthusiasm for the plan and schedule for conducting conferences. They were pleased to have the freedom and flexibility to use the day in their own way, when conferences were not being conducted. They related their appreciation for having the opportunity to meet personally with parents of students in their homeroom while substitute teachers carried out class plans for all of their classes. It also enabled them to direct parents to certain activities or classes referred to during conferences, and parents were able to make observations of school in session. Other teachers made positive remarks about the procedure and the opportunity to visit parents in the building, which permitted them to contribute to the comprehensive improvement of parent orientation to the middle school program. Comments directed to the principal when he conducted parent conferences emphasized their observations of Westchester's warm, friendly, and helpful staff.

Evaluation of Terminal Objectives

Analysis of Terminal Objective One

1. To develop a conferencing procedure which will enable a minimum of 70 per cent of the sixth grade parents to personally and

individually discuss matters of orientation with the homeroom teacher.

At the conclusion of the parent conferencing schedule, sixth grade homeroom teachers were required to write a brief critique of their conferencing experience. The principal also met with the ten sixth grade homeroom teachers to discuss their experiences, observations, results, and evaluation of the conferences (see Appendix L, page 61). Teachers reported the number of conferences conducted as follows:

<u>Homeroom</u>	<u>Students in Homeroom</u>	<u>Parents Attending</u>	<u>Follow-up Contact by Phone</u>	<u>No Contact</u>
1	24	22	2	-
2	18	15	1	2
3	19	16	1	2
4	22	19	-	3
5	20	15	3	2
6	20	19	1	-
7	21	21	-	-
8	20	15	3	2
9	20	16	3	1
10	<u>21</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	205	173	16	16
Percentages		84	8	8

Analysis of the results revealed that parents representing 174 students of the 205 sixth grade students enrolled at that time attended the parent orientation conferences. Thus, 84 per cent of the parents actually appeared in school for a conference, either on the scheduled day or another day within the week of the scheduled conference. Of those unable to attend, 16 additional parents (18%) were contacted by telephone and a telephone conference was conducted.

This represented a combined conference total of 189 parents, or 92 per cent of the 205 sixth grade students enrolled.

Analysis of Terminal Objective Two

2. To develop and implement a procedure suitable to the staff for all sixth grade homeroom teachers to be available to conduct a parent orientation conference with parents during the school day or in the evening.

Analysis of the written critique of sixth grade parent orientation conferences (see Appendix L, page 61) submitted by the ten sixth grade homeroom teachers revealed that 100 per cent of the teachers considered the procedure suitable to them personally. Further, 100 per cent stated that the school's objectives were effectively served, and that the conferences assisted them to develop more personal, positive relationships with their students in homeroom.

Analysis of Terminal Objective Three

3. To assure that 75 per cent of the sixth grade parents indicate, on the questionnaires issued to parents at the conclusion of the conference, that the conference and orientation procedures are useful and effective, that they understand the schools' program, that the transition from elementary to middle school is being satisfactorily handled, and that they are confident teachers are interested in their children as individuals and concerned about their adjustment and academic growth in the middle school. Further, that 75 per cent of the randomly selected parents, with whom the principal confers, will yield the same affirmation.

Questionnaires were issued to parents at the conclusion of the sixth grade parent orientation conferences (see Appendix M, page 66). One hundred seventy-three questionnaires were issued and ninety-three were returned. This represented a 53 per cent return. Analysis of those returned revealed that 92 per cent of the parents considered the movement and adjustment from the elementary school to Westchester Middle School to be satisfactory to very good. Ninety-eight per cent of the parents considered the conference itself to be good to very good. Ninety-five per cent indicated that they understand the procedures, rules, and other necessary information about Westchester. Eighty-nine per cent stated that they understand the instructional program and other activities offered at Westchester.

Regarding the length of time established for the conference, 94 per cent indicated it was good, while 86 per cent considered the time of day to be good. One hundred per cent of the parents stated that communications between the home and school are good as a result of the parent conference. One hundred per cent also felt that the staff and administration responded to their questions and concerns in a very satisfactory manner.

When the principal held conferences with the twenty randomly selected parents following the conferences, 100 per cent of parents expressed agreement with the results of the questionnaire.

Analysis of Terminal Objective Four

To reduce or eliminate by 50 per cent the fears, anxieties, and/or erroneous perceptions of the middle school among sixth grade students and their parents by the end of the first quarter.

At the end of the first quarter of the school year, questionnaires were issued to all sixth grade students (see Appendix N, page 68). The purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit the students' feelings about being at Westchester after one quarter. The questionnaire was designed in the same format as the questionnaire completed by students as fifth grade students in May, 1977.

One hundred and ninety-five questionnaires were issued and all were completed. Analysis of the results revealed that 183, or 98 per cent, felt good about being at Westchester. When asked if they still had fears or concerns about matters they were concerned about prior to entry, twenty-nine, or 15 per cent, indicated affirmatively. This compares with 60 per cent when students were asked the same question in May, 1977, as fifth graders. The fears, anxieties, and concerns, therefore, were reduced or eliminated by 75 per cent.

Questionnaires were also sent to parents (see Appendix O, page 69) via their children. One hundred and ninety-five questionnaires were issued and one hundred and seven returned. This represented a 55 per cent return. Analysis of the results revealed that 98, or 93 per cent, felt good about having their child at Westchester Middle School. When asked if they still had fears or anxieties about matters they were concerned about prior to their child's entry, twenty-two or 20 per cent, indicated affirmatively. This compares with 52 per cent when parents were asked the same question in May, 1977, as their children were completing fifth grade. The fears, anxieties, and concerns, therefore, were reduced or eliminated for parents by 62 per cent.

Analysis of Terminal Objective Five

5. To assure that sixth grade students make a successful transition and adjustment to middle school by having no more than 10 per cent of the students referred to the assistant principal for behavior reasons, and no more than 5 per cent receive failing grades in classes during the first quarter.

Analysis of the student behavior report (see Appendix P, page 70), maintained by the assistant principal, revealed that there were 37 referrals made for sixth grade students during the first quarter. The total number of different students actually referred was 23. This represented 11 per cent of the sixth grade class, which compared favorably with the over 27 per cent of the previous year during the same period. Further, 17 students, or 8 per cent, reported incidents of having difficulty with older students. This compared favorably over the 23 per cent the previous year during the first quarter.

The homeroom teachers' critique of orientation procedures, and their personal observations of students during the first quarter, revealed that students adjusted more quickly to the school and the program than they had the previous year. They were prompt to class, had minimal difficulties finding their way in the new building, and could work locker combinations more quickly. This was primarily due to the personal assistance provided by all the staff and students, as well as the comprehensive special emphasis made for assuring a smooth transition of sixth grade students to the middle school.

Analysis of the grade report (see Appendix Q, page 71) of grades issued at the end of the first quarter revealed that a total of 10 students received an F grade. This represented 2 per cent of the sixth grade students, which compared favorably over the 15 per cent during the first quarter of the previous year.

Summary of Findings

When all of the data were gathered and assembled, a conference committee consisting of the principal, assistant superintendent for instruction, two counselors, and two sixth grade teachers reviewed and evaluated the results.

The findings for each objective revealed that parent orientation to the middle-school program was improved significantly in all instances. Further, analysis of the objectives relating to the students' smooth transition and adjustment to Westchester all revealed significant improvement over previous years. In view of the fact there are numerous variables beyond the scope of this practicum that influence parents' understanding of a school's program, as well as the students' smooth transition and adjustment, this practicum was considered successful.

CHAPTER VII
INSTITUTIONALIZING AND FURTHER
APPLICATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

The conference committee recommended that the model for Improving Parent Orientation to the Middle School be used annually at Westchester Middle School. It recommended that the parent conferences with homeroom teachers be continued in seventh grade to retain the positive home-school relationship established in the sixth grade. The committee suggested that consideration be given for continuing parent conferences with homeroom teachers in the eighth grade as well. To do so will improve the home-school relationship throughout middle school years. Further, the committee suggested that if such conferences were to be held for eighth graders they should be held in the Spring and be considered assessment conferences. This will enable homeroom teachers and parents to review the students' performance, growth, and development at Westchester at the point of exiting. Data received in such continuing conferences will offer future improvements for the orientation process for sixth grade students. Finally, the conference committee recommended that the model be used in the other Duneland Middle School.

A copy of this report will be filed with the assistant superintendent for instruction in the Duneland Schools. Copies will also be made available to other interested school districts upon request. Several inquiries have already been made in recent months.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 5th GRADE STUDENTS

In a few months you will be entering the sixth grade at Westchester Middle School. In order for us to prepare for your beginning in the new school it will help if we know how you feel at this time about the move to Westchester. Please circle the answer that most nearly expresses your feelings:

1. Are you looking forward to coming to Westchester Middle School? Yes No
2. Do you have any fears or concerns about coming to the middle school? Yes No
3. Do you feel you will have difficulty with any of the following:

a. doing the classwork	Yes	No
b. adjusting to the school	Yes	No
c. making new friends	Yes	No
d. finding your way to classes	Yes	No
e. working locker combinations	Yes	No
f. older students	Yes	No
g. learning and following school rules	Yes	No
4. List any other matters you have questions about:
5. What are you looking forward to most in coming to Westchester?

APPENDIX B

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 5th GRADE STUDENTS

In a few months your child will be entering the sixth grade at Westchester Middle School. In order for us to effectively assist your child to make a smooth transition it will help if we know how you feel, at this time, about your child's move to Westchester. Please circle the appropriate answer:

1. Are you looking forward to your child attending Westchester Middle School? Yes No
2. Do you have any fears or concerns about your child coming to the middle school? Yes No
3. Do you feel that your child will have difficulty with any of the following:

a. doing the classwork	Yes	No
b. making new friends	Yes	No
c. adjusting to the school	Yes	No
d. continuing progress in skill development	Yes	No
e. older students	Yes	No
4. Do you have any concern about the differences in grading and reporting practices between the elementary and middle school. Yes No
5. Do you feel regularly scheduled parent conferences should be continued in the middle school? Yes No
6. List any other matters you have questions about:
7. What are you looking forward to most in having your child attend Westchester?

APPENDIX C

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
1050 S. FIFTH STREET
CHESTERTON, INDIANA 46304

April 12, 1978

Dear Fifth Grade Parents:

WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL!!

In just a few weeks your child will be completing an enjoyable elementary experience. We want to continue that pleasant experience throughout the next three years at Westchester.

Our orientation for parents of incoming 6th graders will be in three stages, as follows:

1. General Orientation for Students and Parents:

On May 16, at 7:00 p.m., a general orientation will be conducted in the Westchester Middle School Cafetorium. Parents and students of incoming students from Bailly, Brummitt, St. Patrick and Yost Elementary Schools will be in attendance.

2. Registration:

Sixth grade students will register at Westchester during the last week of August (check newspaper for exact date). Parents should accompany students. As students register they will receive a class schedule, lock, and locker assignment, pay book rental, and tour the building.

3. Homeroom Teacher Conference:

A day during the first two weeks in October has been established for you to meet with your child's homeroom teacher. The purpose of the conference will be to enable you and the homeroom teacher to become acquainted, discuss your child's transition into the middle school over the first few weeks of school, and share other useful information. The homeroom teacher will be looking forward to seeing you at that conference. Please complete the attached form so we can schedule the conference at a time most convenient for you. Leave the form with your child's 5th grade teacher today.

Again, WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER, and I will look forward to meeting you personally.

Sincerely,

Don K. Deller
Principal

APPENDIX D

April 12, 1978

To: Mr. Don K. Deller, Principal, Westchester Middle School

From: _____ (Parents-Guardian)

(Address)_____
(Phone)

When you schedule the conference with my child's homeroom teacher
in October, I would prefer it to be:

A.M.

P.M. (Circle preference)

Child's Name_____
Elementary School

APPENDIX E

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

May 11, 1978

Dear Parents of Incoming Students:

WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL!

You are invited and encouraged to attend the Westchester Middle School ORIENTATION FOR PARENTS OF INCOMING STUDENTS, Tuesday, May 16, 1978, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Parents will assemble in the cafetorium at 7:00 p.m. The program will include (1) a short slide-tape overview of the middle school program at Westchester, (2) a general outline of the instructional program, as well as the schedule and placement procedures used, (3) an explanation of the homeroom teachers' role and the students' relationship to the homeroom teacher, and (4) other related information. Following the presentation parents and students will be free to tour the building.

We will be looking forward to seeing you Tuesday.

Don K. Deller
Principal

APPENDIX F

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

HOMEROOM PROGRAMPHILOSOPHY

A positive self-concept, a sense of belonging, and the building of leadership are basic needs of middle school students. The Homeroom Program establishes an environment within the school for helping to meet those needs.

The Homeroom Program affords students the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities designed to develop their self-image and human development skills. The homeroom teacher is extremely instrumental in this process. It is the Homeroom Teacher who helps the students set goals and develop methods for achieving these goals, helps students to know their responsibilities and how to assume and fulfill them and helps students to recognize the importance of developing the team concept and how to function effectively as a team member. Further, the homeroom period is a time when students can relate socially with their peers, and develop a very close relationship with their homeroom teacher.

The Homeroom Program also provides an open channel of communication between the home and school. Through such a communication system the homeroom teacher can acquire greater understanding of their students and work with them in more personal ways. By working closely with parents they can contribute significantly to the educational growth of their children and develop greater confidence in the school.

RATIONALE

- I. As a result of the Homeroom Program each student will have the opportunity to acquire a more positive self-image:
 - A. Through praise and individual attention by the staff...
 1. For individual efforts, commitments and achievements
 2. For academics, arts, and athletics
 3. For community efforts
 - B. Through individual and group guidance
 1. Guidance presentations in the Activities Program
 2. Contact forms from classroom teachers to homeroom teachers
 - C. Through development of self-discipline

HOMEROOM PROGRAM/Westchester

- II. As a result of the Homeroom Program each student will have the opportunity to experience the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth of transesence by demonstrating...
 - A. A sense of belonging and responsibility to peers, and pride in the homeroom.
 - 1. The development of the team concept... "You help me enjoy my day and I will help you enjoy your day."
 - 2. The commitment to have 100% participation in the daily student activities program.
 - 3. The identification of students with special problems or needs...peer relationships and other similar personal needs.
 - B. An ability to plan, make choices, and accept responsibilities for those choices.
 - 1. Career presentations in the Activities Program
 - 2. Total involvement in the Homeroom Program
 - 3. Conferences with parents to acquire greater awareness of their strengths and interests.
 - C. A positive mental attitude
 - 1. Personal conferences with each student regularly to discuss total school performance.
 - 2. School wide projects...PROJECT PRIDE, 14 Days to Better Ways at W.M.S., Interdisciplinary Events.
 - 3. Level and Vertical coordination of Curricular Program.
 - 4. Counselor Conferences.
- III. As a result of the Homeroom Teacher Program each student will have at least one adult in the school to relate to on a daily basis in a non-academic environment...
 - A. By showing an awareness and personal interest in the students' academic, social, co curricular, and extra-curricular activities.
 - B. By providing an environment and experiences which will indicate to students that they are worthwhile individuals, and their feelings and concerns are important.
- IV. As a result of the Homeroom Program a method of communication between the home and school will be established through a positive parent-student-homeroom teacher relationship...by sharing pertinent information between home and school to better understand the student's performance during a particular period of time. This information might concern...

HOMEROOM PROGRAM/Westchester Middle

- A. Transition to the middle school from the elementary school ...parent conferences and telephone contacts.
 - B. Home problems such as a recent divorce or separation of parents, or child-parent relationships.
 - C. Academic progress.
 - D. Helping the student with homework and other class work.
 - E. Long term illness or disability that may affect the student's ability to achieve.
 - F. Visual problems, reading difficulties, or health problems (Appropriate referrals should be made).
- V. As a result of the Homeroom Program each student will have a systematic method for being informed of schedules and the daily procedures...
- A. Providing information
 - 1. Reading the daily bulletin
 - 2. Discussion of topics of school wide interest
 - 3. Keeping students informed of homeroom activities
 - B. Clerical Duties
 - 1. Discuss and refer to Student Handbook--the first week of school.
 - 2. Completing necessary forms, information cards, and other items in the Homeroom Teachers' folders.
 - 3. Distribution of Progress Reports
 - 4. Assisting the Student Council Homeroom Representative.
 - 5. Distribution of the Yearbook, School Newspaper, and other notices.
 - 6. Manage ticket sales for the annual Athletic Benefit.
 - 7. Time for students to do special work recommended by teachers.
 - 8. Contact Forms...personal conference discussions.
 - 9. Organization and planning for Interdisciplinary Events.

HOMEROOM PROGRAM/Westchester Middle

CHARACTERISTICS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EFFECTIVE HOMEROOM
TEACHERI. Characteristics of an Effective Homeroom TeacherMUST BE:

good listener	dedicated
understanding	resourceful
make students feel important as individuals	goal oriented
enthusiastic	loving
organized	cooperative
good leader	flexible
good example	adaptable
good manager	sharing
patient	positive
friendly	confident
compassionate	counselor
emphatic	advisor
fair	relater
caring	
involved	

II. Establishing a Positive Homeroom Climate

- A. Have a productive homeroom period each morning.
- B. Develop and maintain good communications with students.
- C. Expect attentiveness to announcements.
- D. Show enthusiasm for homeroom at all times.
- E. Get invlved with the students and relate to them:
 - (1) person to person
 - (2) as a total group to establish their group identity.
- F. Develop interesting and attractive bulletin boards and homeroom setting.
- G. Demonstrate pride in the homeroom.
- H. Identify and set homeroom goals to be achieved.
- I. Develop ways to serve as a resource to the students.
- K. Develop the team spirit.
- L. Stress the importance of 100% participation.
- M. Make students aware of the homeroom teacher's role.
- N. Establish contact with the home early.
- O. Stress importance of good positive attitude toward students, staff, school.
- P. Stress importance of good manners and behavior at all times.
- Q. Discover the interests of the individual students and build upon them.
- R. Assure that each student has an avenue of expression.
- S. Observe students closely to assist with potential problems.
- T. Develop ways to include "non-participants."
- U. Accept responsibility for actions of the homeroom.
- V. Develop an accurate accounting procedure to assume promptness for activities and classes.
- W. Develop visible means of recognizing students.

HOMEROOM PROGRAM/Westchester Middle

III. Four Base Responsibilities

A. Management -

1. organization of homeroom
2. start day positively
3. thoroughly inform students
4. expect prompt attendance
5. supervise students in all homeroom activities
6. monitor behavior and academic progress in all school activities

B. Counseling -

1. serve as resource to students' needs and questions
2. learn students' interests
3. identify strengths and weaknesses of students
4. maintain close contact with other teachers
5. motivate students
6. assist students to develop positive attitude
7. help students recognize the value of pride in self, others, and school

C. Advising -

1. help students to know the purposes of homeroom program
2. help students to know the homeroom teacher's role and responsibilities
3. help students to know their responsibilities as homeroom members
4. keep students informed about all events
5. keep students informed about roles and procedures
6. coordinate school wide programs--as consistency, e.g., manners, attending assemblies, etc.
7. help students to know and apply the principles of self management--help students develop leadership skills

D. Relating -

1. Get to know students as individuals
2. share ideas, thoughts, opinions and other comments informally
3. show patience and understanding
4. listen to students
5. be sensitive to feelings, attitudes, and values
6. establish security in the homeroom for each student
7. be a loving and caring person

APPENDIX G

• DUNELAND SCHOOL CORPORATION 55

Administration Center
700 West Porter Avenue
Chesterton, Indiana 46304
Phone: 219-926-2151

Westchester Middle School
1060 South Fifth Street
Chesterton, Indiana 46304
Phone: 926-2173

September 20, 1978

Dear

On _____ will be having conferences
with all of the parents of new 6th grade students in _____ homeroom.

_____ would like to meet with you at _____ It is our hope
that this time is convenient for you. However, if there is a conflict
please call to arrange another time for that day.

The purpose of this conference will be to: (1) enable you and
to become acquainted, (2) personally welcome you to Westchester Middle School,
(3) assess and discuss _____ transition into the middle school during
the first month, (4) afford you the opportunity to ask questions or make
aware of any special concerns you may have, and (5) establish
a line of communications between you and the school in order that we may
more efficiently and effectively serve you while _____ is at
Westchester.

This is not intended to be a conference to discuss _____ academic
progress. However, such a conference can be arranged with the appropriate
teacher or teachers on another day at your request.

We will look forward to serving you on the _____.

Sincerely,

Don K. Deller
Principal

APPENDIX H

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

HOMEROOM TEACHER - PARENT CONFERENCES
(Suggested Guidelines)STARTING THE CONFERENCE:

Give a friendly relaxed greeting. Remember, the parent is generally far more ill at ease than the teacher. Talk about something of general interest. Without a feeling of at-homeness on the parent, the conference will not proceed satisfactorily in a give-and-take manner. Know the name of the child and parent to whom you are talking and refer to them by name.

ESTABLISHING PURPOSE:

1. To enable the homeroom teacher and the parents to become acquainted.
2. To personally welcome the parents to Westchester Middle School and explain homeroom teacher's role and relationship with students.
3. To mutually assess and discuss the child's transition into the middle school during the first month of the school year.
4. To afford parents the opportunity to ask questions or make the homeroom teacher aware of any special concerns the parents may have.
5. To establish a line of communications between the parents and Westchester Middle School.
6. To encourage parents to continue their involvement with the school throughout middle school years.

EXPLANATION OF HOMEROOM TEACHER'S ROLE:

1. Administrative
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Daily announcements (communications)
2. Daily Student Activities
 - a. Planning and organization for events
 - b. Enthusiasm, pride, school spirit, sharing (team concept)
 - c. Student responsibilities (service)
 - d. Student opportunities (Group competition, individual competition, special interests, vocations, guidance, leisure reading, recreation films)
 - e. Supervision
3. Student-Teacher Relationship and Involvement in Non-academic ways and personal interest in their success in all areas at Westchester.
4. Counseling
5. Student Council
6. Monitor students over-all progress in school.

CONFERENCES--Suggested Guidelines

HOMEROOM TEACHER's OBSERVATIONS OF THEIR CHILD:

1. Adjustment to school (general)
2. Peer relationship and social adjustment
3. Enthusiasm (For homeroom activities, school, etc.)
4. Attitude
5. Especially good things accomplished
6. Problems or Concerns

SOLICIT PARENT OBSERVATIONS OF THEIR CHILD:

1. Comments and feelings about Westchester
2. Problems or Concerns
3. Special Interest, hobbies, and activities enjoyed at home
4. Health
5. Other

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:

1. Remind to and refer to the Parent Handbook (Sent home to parents first week)
2. Procedures for arranging a conference for academic reasons (contact Main Office)
3. Policy for Excused Absence
4. Regular Absence Procedure (Note)
5. Grading (letter Grades)
6. Reporting Periods - Progress Reports (9 weeks) and Interim as necessary or useful (positive or negative)
7. Show examples of forms used
8. Explain enrichment classes - (for non-band or orchestra students)
9. Encouraged to visit classes (check in office when arriving)
10. Encourage to come for lunch
11. Encourage to attend Public Relations Programs (Give schedule) and especially Parents' Night
12. Advise about physicals required for extra-curricular sports (boys and girls)
13. Explain homework policy for middle school students
14. Advise of your time schedule and availability

CONCLUDING THE CONFERENCE:

1. Assure that all parent questions have been answered that pertain to the homeroom teacher
2. Assure that parents understand, how, when, and where to have questions answered that cannot be answered by the homeroom teacher
3. Offer positive comments about the child as the conference concludes

FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCE:

1. Refer special notes to appropriate people (e.g. counselor, administrative, nurse, team or level coordinators)
2. Complete TEACHER-PARENT CONFERENCE RECORD

APPENDIX I

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

There are many expressions which we use that may leave a false, or undesirable impression. Here is a list of expressions which may leave a negative impression, with a kindred, more positive, phrase which might be used in conferences or on report cards:

Negative Expressions

Must
Lazy
Troublemaker
Uncooperative
Cheats
Stupid
Never does the right thing
Below average

Truant
Impertinent
Steal
Unclean
Dumbell
Help
Poor
Calamity
Disinterested
Expense
Contribute to
Stubborn
Insolent
Liar
Wastes time
Sloppy
Incurred failure
Mean
Time and again
Dubious
Poor grade of work
Clumsy
Profane
Selfish
Rude
Bashful
Show off
Will fail him

More Positive Expressions

Should
Can do more when he tries
Disturbs class
Should learn to work with others
Depends on others to do his work
Can do better work with help
Can learn to do the right thing
Working at his own level

Absent without permission
Discourteous
Without permission
Poor habits
Capable of doing better
Cooperation
Handicapped
Lost opportunity
Complacent, not challenged
Investment
Invest in
Insists on having his way
Outspoken
Tendency to stretch the truth
Could make better use of time
Could do neater work
Failed to meet requirements
Difficulty in getting along with others
Usually
Uncertain
Below his usual standard
Not physically well co-ordinated
Uses unbecoming language
Seldom shares with others
Inconsiderate of others
Reserved
Tries to get attention
Has a chance of passing, if

From "Conference Time for Teacher and Parents," NEA, 1961.

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

HOMEROOM TEACHER - PARENT CONFERENCE

Summary

STUDENT: _____ GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

TEACHER: _____ HOMEROOM: _____

PARENT: _____

1. Summary of teacher observations to date: _____

2. Summary of parent observations to date: _____

3. Things that need attention as a result of this conference: _____

4. Homeroom teacher Evaluation of Conference: _____

_____ pleasant

_____ not so pleasant

_____ useful for me

_____ not very helpful

_____ appreciated by parents

_____ received nonchalantly

_____ I did a good job

_____ I could have done better job

_____ overall successful

_____ The conference overall unsuccessful

5. Recommendations: _____

• DUNELAND SCHOOL CORPORATION

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Administration Center
700 West Porter Avenue
Chesterton, Indiana 46304
Phone: 219-926-2151

Westchester Middle School
1060 South Fifth Street
Chesterton, Indiana 46304
Phone 926-2173

Dear Visitor:

Welcome to Westchester Middle School! We are pleased that you have an opportunity to visit us and hope that the time you spend here will be profitable to you and to us at Westchester.

To help make your visit more meaningful, we have requested that you check-in at the main office to receive a name tag, a visitor's packet, and assistance relative to the nature of your visit. Please wear your visitor name tag while here to alert our staff and students that you are observing. Feel free to enter any area or classroom for observation purposes, unless there is some type of "DO NOT DISTURB" sign indicating video taping, testing, etc. is in progress.

To assist us during your visit, please note any questions, observations or comments you may wish to discuss later with a Westchester staff member.

Following is a brief questionnaire to provide "feedback" for the Westchester Staff. You may sign the sheet, if you wish, but it is not necessary. Please leave the completed questionnaire in the Westchester Office before you depart.

Thank you for your time and interest in Westchester Middle School. We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

Don K. Deller, Principal

I am a _____ student at _____
_____ teacher at _____
_____ parent of a child at _____
_____ other

I am spending approximately _____ hours at Westchester Middle.

My purpose in observing Westchester Middle School is:

What impressed me most about Westchester was:

What impressed me least about Westchester was:

If I could change any one thing at Westchester, it would be:

If I could take one thing (program, idea, etc.) from Westchester to use in my (school, home, office, etc.) it would be:

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX L

CRITIQUE OF 6TH GRADE PARENT CONFERENCE

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS 1978-79

Homeroom Teacher: #1

1. All the parents I spoke with were very happy that the conferences were being held.
2. Most seemed to feel that their children were very happy with the middle school.
3. A couple showed concern over the load of homework. I relayed to them that the beginning of the school year could have something to do with this, but if it continued that we could look into it.
4. Myself I was very happy for the opportunity to meet the parents and chat. I would enjoy doing it again.

Homeroom Teacher: #2

My conference was really positive. All parents agreed that this could be useful to both of us.

The adjustments to Westcnester were varied. Most expressed a concern about the "big step" to Middle School. Also, most were very happy with their kid's adjustment as well as these conferences to help remind them that we do care for the new individual needs.

Special concerns were in the areas of homework, academic challenge and behavior. Homework questions were explained on the handouts. Academics were discussed in terms of the Interim Progress Reports. Parents love this idea and want exactly what these represent to us and to them. Most also wanted to make assurances that behavior was expected to be O.K. and wanted to be notified of any problems.

My recommendations are simply that these be continued with the 6th graders and repeated when they become 7th graders. Realizing every student will change in a year or two, we hope it will be to the better. Maybe each teacher, at the end of the year, write a couple of goals that they hope each student could improve upon for the next year. The best can improve some places.

Homeroom Teacher: #3

Most of the parents were happy to come in for a conference. In many cases this was the first time they had any children at W.M.S.

In all cases the parents were pleased with their child's adjustment to the middle school. One of the hardest things for the students to get use to, was the locks on their locker. Three of the parents said that if W.M.S. were more like the junior high that they had attended, the adjustment would have been more traumatic.

Homeroom Teacher: #3

Here is a list of the special parental concerns that were brought to my attention.

1. What sports and when would they be available to the 6th graders.
2. Physical problems (a hearing problem was mentioned).
3. I was informed that two of my students had been in Special Ed. I had not been aware of this.
4. One student had about five hours of homework on a Monday night.
5. Bus problems (bus is never on time).
6. One mother was very unhappy with the school corporation in general.
7. One parent asked about drugs in the middle school.

I have always believed in parent conferences. It is very important for the school and home to have a closer working relationship. This is one of the best forms of public relations that a school system can take part in. I would recommend that the practice of parent conferences be continued and extended to the other grade levels.

Homeroom Teacher: #4

In preparation of the parent conferences, I telephoned all the parents about two weeks in advance of the scheduled meetings. I felt comfortable talking to all the parents on the phone. I rescheduled several conferences to accommodate the parents. Two conferences were rescheduled because the fathers wanted to attend also, which I appreciated their interest and expressed my appreciation. 100% of the parents said that they would come. Unfortunately, only 75% ended up attending.

I was extremely nervous about my first conference. Surprisingly, most parents were more nervous than I at the beginning of the meeting. I was very happy to meet all the parents, so it was not difficult to have a cheerful and positive attitude. I tried to make the conferences as casual and comfortable as possible. After the first few minutes I could see that most parents were relaxed.

At the beginning of all the conferences, I explained the nature of the meeting; it was not an academic conference but a chance for us to meet and open up communication between parents and school; to discuss the students' adjustments both positive and negative, to W.M.S.; to explain the program at W.M.S. especially for activities program, which involves homeroom and my role as homeroom teacher; and finally my observations of the students thus far.

All the parents expressed their appreciation of the time and effort put forth for the conferences. Those parents who have had students at W.M.S. before felt that even though they were familiar with the W.M.S. program it was a good idea to get together early in the year.

I feel that the conferences I had were successful in that the parents really opened up and talked with me. Of course, I don't have anything to compare them with being a new teacher.

All the parents said they remembered receiving the handouts before. They were very interested in the Interim Report Forms, especially that they could also be used for sending a positive report, and the new report cards. All the parents I spoke to were familiar with the A, B, C, D, F letter grades. No one said whether they were happy about the letter grades or not.

Many parents were relieved to hear that I felt their child had adjusted fine to W.M.S. from my standpoint. No one felt that their child was not able to adjust adequately to this higher level of education. They all seemed to want their children to develop independence, and yet they also were willing to help their children if they needed help.

In conclusion, I know the conferences have helped me to know and relate to my students more appropriately and effectively. Out of the five parents who did not come, I really feel it would have been beneficial to meet with two of them. One child is in Special Ed. and I feel it's important for his parents to know how actively involved he is with other students. He is a fantastic person, and I wanted them to know how I felt. The other child is a definite behavior, attitude and academic problem, and I feel the parents need to get involved before it is too late to change his behavior, or to have not been able to prevent more problems.

I don't have any recommendations for future conferences, except to discuss with the teachers some of the expected concerns that are important to handle correctly.

Homerom Teacher: #5

Most parents in attendance thought it was a good idea to have a conference of this nature. They were concerned about the programs and procedures of the middle school.

Of the parents who came, all of them were quick to say that their child liked our school. Most of them said that the biggest adaptation their child had was learning to operate the combination locks on their lockers.

More than half of the parents wished to know about the academic progress of their child. Almost all of them praised our progress sheet form over the one they saw last year in elementary school.

Most parents appreciated my efforts in explaining the programs and services of W.M.S. These conferences would probably be more effective at the three to four week level of school.

Homeroom Teacher: #6

Extremely positive response to the conferences. Parents were pleased to have an opportunity to learn about the W.M.S. program. (One comment in particular: Mother stated this was the 3rd child to go through W.M.S. and her first time to hear about the program and wished it had been done sooner.)

Adjustment to W.M.S. apparently was no problem. Parents responded by saying their children enjoyed school and looked forward to attending each day. Two parents expressed a concern at the situation which occurs at the bus stops and on the bus. These kind of problems are visible to the community and reflect on the school.

I believe there should be some kind of opportunity for the parent to again contact the homeroom teacher with an emphasis on performance in school.

Homeroom Teacher: #7

1. I think most of the parents were appreciative of the opportunity to visit school and find out about the daily program their children are involved in. I didn't find any parents that were dissatisfied with the program at W.M.S. and all felt that their children adapted to the middle school quite well.
2. The only special concern was how their children were doing scholastically. I told them of the steps to follow in getting a conference with an individual teacher or as a group. Another concern, and this didn't occur too frequently, was the homework load in some departments.
3. Overall, I think I was able to explain to the parents the daily routine of scheduling, after school activities, lunch, and the noon time program.

Homeroom Teacher: #8

All meetings were cordial and friendly; I made a point of inviting the parents to school, for conferences when they feel the need or for lunch when they'd like to visit. The parents were very positive about the value of the conferences, especially for family's new to Westchester. The parents seem to feel that the children enjoy school, feel happy about coming and look forward to school. Some concerns were: beginning band eligibility and drugs. I handled both easily and referred the band problems. Seems to be a good idea to meet the parents in a pre-crisis situation.

Homeroom Teacher: #9

Every parent that came in for a conference appeared to feel very positive about the idea of a conference and about the conference itself. No parent left me with the feeling that it was a waste of time.

The parents all felt their child was adjusting very well and I'm sure the conferences helped the parents adjust to the middle school.

Two parents were concerned about being eliminated from the band program because they hadn't participated in the summer program.

I enjoyed the conferences very much but after looking back upon them I didn't spend enough time discussing the child and his personal needs. These conferences were more informative to the parents than to me. Nevertheless, I know the time was still well spent.

Keep having them during the first four weeks of school and inform the entire staff about them so that any potential problems can be mentioned by the homeroom teacher.

Homeroom Teacher: #10

1. In all but three cases the parents could understand why we asked for this type of conference. In those cases the parents were already familiar with W.M.S. and saw little need for talk about adjustment, because there was no "problem" to talk about.
2. In all cases the parents were happy with the adjustment. Some verbalized that they had had apprehensions about the school and/or their child's readiness for "middle" school. Many expressed the view that they had seen no real "adjustment." After the first day (or week) the child felt very comfortable. Several also reported that their child looked forward to school more than in previous years.
3. Six mentioned the need for basics. Three or four mentioned phonics and spelling specifically. One said that her child was afraid to use the bathrooms here. One was concerned about math groupings. Most thought that continued school-home contact was a good idea. One was very concerned about the reputation of the school.
4. In only two cases, I felt that I had accomplished little or nothing by having the conference. Both of those parents were very familiar with our building and program. With that in mind I feel that the conferences were beneficial and appreciated.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Homeroom teachers should be encouraged to read the files on special students before meeting with the parents. This can save some embarrassment.
2. Perhaps a follow-up note reiterating the desirability of continued home/school contact would be helpful.
3. I think a real plus ought to be made to get "new" parents to visit the school during one special week. Perhaps--American Education Week.

APPENDIX M
WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHESTERGON, INDIANA

PARENT/HOMEROOM TEACHER CONFERENCE EVALUATION FORM

This questionnaire is being issued to all parents participating in the conferencing program for parents of sixth grade students. This information will assist us to assess the value of the conferences, and the effectiveness of procedures used for serving parents and students of Westchester Middle School.

Please complete this form and return to Westchester Middle School within the next week.

Use the following rating scale: (1) very good; (2) good;
(3) satisfactory; (4) not so good; (5) poor

(CIRCLE RATING)

1. Our child's movement and adjustment
from the elementary school to
Westchester Middle School has been... 1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____
2. The conference with our child's home-
room teacher was... 1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____
3. We feel that our understanding of the
procedures, rules, and other necessary
information about Westchester is... 1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____
4. We feel that our understanding of the
instructional program and other
activities offered at Westchester is... 1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____
5. The length of time allowed for the
conference was... 1 2 3 4 5
Comments: _____

PARENT/HOMEROOM EVALUATION FORM:

6. Our conference was scheduled at a time of the day that was... 1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

7. As a result of this conference the line of communication between us and the school appears to be... 1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

8. The manner in which the Westchester Middle School staff and administration have responded to our questions and concerns has been... 1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

9. We would appreciate receiving more information about... _____

10. Additional comments, questions, or suggestions:

Thank you,

Don K. Deller
Principal

APPENDIX N

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

You have been at Westchester Middle School as a sixth grade student for one quarter. We would like to know how you feel about the middle school at this time. Please circle the appropriate answer to the following questions:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you feel good about being at Westchester Middle School? | Yes | No |
| 2. You may have had some fears or concerns about coming to Westchester as a 5th grader. If so, do you still have any of those same concerns? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you feel you are having difficulty with any of the following at this time? | | |
| a. doing the classwork | Yes | No |
| b. adjusting to the school | Yes | No |
| c. making new friends | Yes | No |
| d. finding your way around the school | Yes | No |
| e. working locker combinations | Yes | No |
| f. older students | Yes | No |
| g. learning and following school rules | Yes | No |
| 4. List any matters you have questions about at this time: | | |

5. List some things you like about Westchester Middle School:

APPENDIX O

WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE: 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

Your child has been at Westchester Middle School for one quarter. We would like to know how you feel about the middle school at this time. Please circle the appropriate answer to the following questions:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you feel good about having your child at Westchester Middle School? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you feel your child has made a good and smooth adjustment to the middle school? | Yes | No |
| 3. You may have had some fears or concerns about your child coming to Westchester prior to entry. If so, do you still have any of those same concerns? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do you feel your child is having difficulty with any of the following? | | |
| a. doing the classwork | Yes | No |
| b. adjusting to the school | Yes | No |
| c. making new friends | Yes | No |
| d. continuing progress in skill development | Yes | No |
| e. older students | Yes | No |
| 5. Do you have any concern about the grading and reporting practices used at Westchester Middle School? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you feel the parent orientation conference conducted by your child's homeroom teacher was helpful, and beneficial to your child's adjustment to Westchester Middle School? | Yes | No |
| 7. List any matters you have questions about at this time: | | |
| 8. List some things you like about Westchester Middle School: | | |

APPENDIX P
WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENT BEHAVIOR REPORT
6th Grade
1st Quarter, 1978-79

<u>Reason for Referral</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assembly disturbance	1
Bus problem	2
Classroom disruption	6
Fight	4
Hall (miscellaneous)	6
Problems with older students	17
Safety patrol	<u>1</u>
Total	37 = 18%
Number of different students referred	21 = 11%

APPENDIX Q
WESTCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

GRADE REPORT
GRADE 6
1st QUARTER, 1978-79

SUBJECT	A's	B's	C's	D's	F's	TOTALS
Communications	46 = 24%	95 = 49%	49 = 25%	4 = 2%	1 = 1%	195
Math	50 = 26%	101 = 52%	35 = 18%	6 = 3%	3 = 1%	195
Science	62 = 32%	62 = 32%	59 = 30%	9 = 5%	3 = 1%	195
Social Studies	35 = 17%	81 = 41%	66 = 33%	16 = 8%	2 = 1%	195
Art	11 = 21%	18 = 36%	20 = 43%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%	49
Music	12 = 25%	22 = 47%	11 = 22%	2 = 6%	1 = 1%	47
Home Economics	16 = 33%	26 = 52%	7 = 13%	1 = 2%	0 = 0%	50
Industrial Arts	26 = 53%	14 = 30%	7 = 14%	2 = 3%	0 = 0%	49
Physical Education	92 = 49%	75 = 40%	21 = 11%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%	188
Health	10 = 20%	18 = 38%	16 = 34%	3 = 6%	0 = 0%	47
Recreation	11 = 21%	25 = 49%	13 = 26%	2 = 4%	0 = 0%	51
Band	14 = 32%	20 = 45%	9 = 22%	1 = 1%	0 = 0%	44
Orchestra	4 = 38%	3 = 29%	3 = 25%	1 = 1%	0 = 0%	12
TOTALS	389 = 29%	560 = 42%	316 = 24%	47 = 3%	10 = 1%	1,322